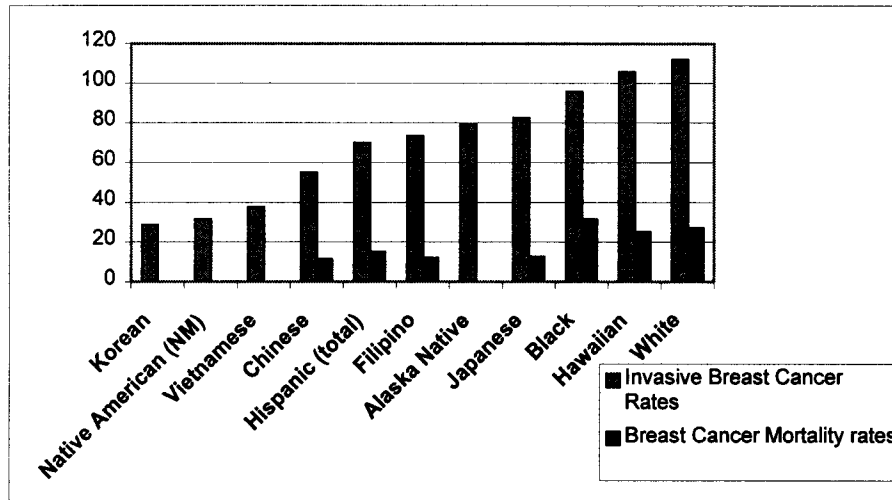


BREAST CANCER AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

According to the National Cancer Institute, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women in the United States, no matter their race or ethnicity.

Non-Hispanic White, Hawaiian, and Black women have the highest rates of invasive breast cancer. The lowest rates occur among Korean, American Indian, and Vietnamese women have the lowest rates of invasive breast cancer. The chart below gives the comparative incidence and mortality rates, by ethnicity, according to NCI's 1988-1992 data (the most recent available on NCI's SEER website).



In situ breast cancer, which occurs at much lower rates and can be more responsive to treatment than invasive breast cancer, appears in similar racial/ethnic patterns as invasive cancers.

Among women aged 30-45 age-specific incidence rates for invasive breast cancer also presents similar ethnic patterns, however, among women aged 30-54 years the rates among Hawaiian women are comparable to those for White non-Hispanic women. Among women aged 55-69 years and 70 years and older, rates are highest for White, Hawaiian, and black women.

Racial/ethnic patterns of mortality differ slightly from those observed for incidence of the disease. At 15% Japanese-American women have the lowest mortality rate. Black Women, at 33%, have the highest death rate from breast cancer. Black women also have the highest age-adjusted mortality rate, followed by White, and Hawaiian women. Perhaps because more Black women, than White women, have their cancer diagnosed at later, less treatable, stages only in the 70 and older age group, do deaths from breast cancer by White women exceed that for Black women.

Important risk factors for female breast cancer include early age at onset of menarche, late age at onset of menopause, first full-term pregnancy after age 30, a mother and a sister who had pre-menopausal breast cancer (or any family history of ovarian, intestinal or breast cancer), and a personal history of breast cancer or non-cancerous benign proliferating breast disease. In addition, obesity, having never given birth to a child, and urban residence have been shown to be associated with increased risk of breast cancer.

Although there is insufficient data on ethnicity differences in the occurrence of male breast cancer (MBC), what data there is suggests that Black men are afflicted with and die from MBC at twice the rate that White men do.

For information on Ethnicity differences in Breast Cancer NCI's website at <http://seer.cancer.gov/>, or the health section of a specific ethnic website.